



HEFCW's mission, as an intermediary body between the Welsh Assembly Government and the higher education sector in Wales, is to promote internationally excellent higher education in Wales, for the benefit of individuals, society and the economy, in Wales and more widely.

To fulfil our mission, we must ensure that we provide an effective service to our stakeholders, and that clear, accessible and strategic communications support both our internal operations and our relationships with the Welsh higher education sector, the Welsh Assembly Government and other external partners.

In order to assess how effective our service is, and how well our relationships work, we commissioned, in autumn 2007, our first ever survey of stakeholders and partners.

The independent survey gathered views about the services we provide and about our relationships with other organisations.

This included feedback about:

- people's knowledge, awareness and views of HEFCW
- perceptions about HEFCW's role
- perceptions about the quality of services and support provided by HEFCW
- contact and dealings with HEFCW staff
- the effectiveness of HEFCW's methods of communication
- perceptions about the effectiveness of the relationships between HEFCW and our partners and key stakeholders
- priority areas for improvement

As this is the first such survey HEFCW has conducted, we cannot yet say anything about progress in these respects. But we can compare our overall "favourability rating" with that of the other higher education funding bodies in the UK, based on their latest, similar, surveys, albeit with significantly different sample sizes.

Our 74% favourability rating is comparable with that of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), at 72%. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) achieved a 76% favourability rating in its first survey; this has now increased to 84%.

We are encouraged by this outcome, and with much of the finer grained detail that emerges. There is a good deal of satisfaction with the work that we do, which is down to the hard work and efforts of HEFCW's small but professional team of staff. However, it is also clear that we can improve our systems and ways of working to improve our effectiveness and ensure that more of our partners are consistently satisfied with the work that we do.

We will listen to and act on any concerns our partners might have in their relations with us. We have lessons to learn about how they can be more satisfied with the

level of service we provide. But we conclude from the survey that we need to explain our role better in relation to the various other bodies with whom we interact. We are developing a strategy for this. We will also develop a strategy which will help us improve our interaction with HE institutions, both face to face and through clearer and better focused written requests and information..

Finally, we have plans to improve our media profile – and that of HE in Wales - and to improve our website and our newsletter.

Roger Thomas

Chairman, HEFCW

June 2008